

and recommends that the national police force be disbanded.

I find these reports to be even more disturbing considering the overwhelming costs of the war. Congress has already appropriated nearly \$565 billion for the war in Iraq since March 2003, at a rate of approximately \$10 billion per month in Iraq. This has cost the taxpayers of the 32nd Congressional District an estimated \$1.1 billion. This money could have provided health care coverage for 447,203 individuals or college scholarships for 167,215 students.

The American people are frustrated and want a new direction in Iraq and an end to the war. According to a poll by the New York Times, 78 percent of Americans believe the U.S. should reduce its current level of troops or the withdrawal of all troops from Iraq. A USA Today poll shows that 6 percent of Americans would like for the U.S. to set a timetable to withdraw our forces from Iraq and stick to that timetable.

I agree. This grave situation requires a policy to secure and stabilize Iraq, one that constructively engages in diplomacy and partners with neighboring countries and the region to create a stable and peaceful nation, not a blank check to send more men and women into harm's way. We must resist establishment of permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq and train Iraqis to secure and run Iraq. Although I strongly disagree with the policies that continue to endanger our servicemen and women, I stand firmly behind them and look forward to their redeployment and safe return home.

MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTION DIGITAL AND WIRELESS TECHNOLOGY OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 4, 2007

Ms. JACKSON-LEE OF Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 694, the Minority Serving Institution Digital and Wireless Technology Opportunity Act of 2007. H.R. 694 will further enhance the quality of service of the academic institutions of our nation by providing the technological advances in the quality and delivery of educational services. I support H.R. 694 because it secures a foundation of excellence for the minds of tomorrow by enriching the academic experience and insuring that more students have the opportunity to receive a quality education.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand before you today in support of a bill that will assist (1) historically black colleges and universities, (2) Hispanic-, Alaskan Native-, or Native Hawaiian-serving institutions; (3) tribally controlled colleges or universities; or (4) institutions with a sufficient enrollment of underprivileged students as defined under the Higher Education Act of 1965.

Mr. Speaker, as a former member of the Science Committee and a strong supporter of minority institutions, I have been a champion for closing the digital divide as well as the math and science proficiency gap that exists between American youth and other youth around the world. This divide is especially

wide between minority and low income students. I believe that H.R. 694 is essential in decreasing the academic gap of the quality of education that is often defined by one's income or economic status and will further enhance competitiveness in a globalized economy.

The Information Technology Association of America says in a newly released study that the percentage of women working in technology fields has dropped almost 20 percent since 1996. This statistic is true even though the percentage of women in the overall workforce remained relatively unchanged during that time period. The reason for the drop is mainly the fact that administrative jobs in the tech industry are decreasing, and about a third of the women in the IT workforce serve in administrative positions. The ITAA analyzes information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, BLS, Current Population Surveys to evaluate trends in the American workforce and compiles reports breaking down the data into percentages to determine the progression and regression of diversity. Previous ITAA diversity studies were conducted in 1998 and 2003. The reports also include a discussion of possible barriers to underrepresented groups and solutions for overcoming them.

Their study also showed that Hispanics are the most underrepresented racial group in IT jobs, comprising only 13 percent of the labor pool but only about 6.5 percent of IT workers. However, Hispanics represented less than 5.5 percent in 1996, so their numbers are slowly but steadily growing, even though the Hispanic population in the U.S. is the fastest-growing, and they constitute almost 13 percent of the overall workforce. African Americans are underrepresented by 22 percent, with their numbers actually dropping 1 percent since 1996, from 9 percent in 1996 to 8 percent in 2004. The percentage of African Americans in the overall workforce in 2004 is the same as it was in 1996, 10.7 percent. Interestingly, there are 6.6 percent fewer whites in the IT workforce than in the overall workforce. Asians continue to be significantly overrepresented in the IT workforce, by almost 200 percent.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will increase the number of persons from most minority groups either training or working in information technology, which over the years has been consistently low. Considering only those students who graduate from college, the percentages of Native Americans, African Americans, and Hispanics receiving a degree in computer or information science is actually higher than the percentage among non-Hispanic white males. However, this promising statistic is more than offset by the low number of minorities moving through the educational pipeline.

There are very few minority role models in information technology. Minority students are less likely to have computers at home or at school on which to gain early exposure to information technology. Students who attend historically black colleges and universities face limited computing facilities, compared with the average U.S. college or university. Thus, H.R. 694 will allow minority students the opportunity to utilize the technological advances necessary to compete in today's society.

H.R. 694 directs the Under Secretary of Commerce for Technology to: (1) establish an advisory council to advise on the best approaches toward maximum program participation by eligible institutions; and (2) ensure that

grant awards are made to all types of eligible institutions. This bill is a huge step in the right direction of narrowing the technology and science gap between minority students and others.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 694.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ALLEN BOYD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 11, 2007

Mr. BOYD of Florida. Madam Speaker, had I been in Washington on September 7, 2007, I would have voted in favor of H.R. 1908, the Patent Reform Act of 2007.

HONORING MR. HAGOP BAHTIARIAN

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 11, 2007

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, last month, the Nation lost a great patriot when Mr. Hagop Bahtirian of Emerson, New Jersey, passed away. Mr. Bahtirian was born of Armenian descent in Keskin Maden near Ankara, Turkey in 1909.

In 1915, his father was murdered by Turkish officials, forcing his mother to flee with her children, adopting the Muslim faith and "Turkified" names to survive. In 1919, at the age of only 10, Mr. Bahtirian was placed in an orphanage in Constantinople with his brother. Not until 1922 was he able to escape to Marseilles, France, a survivor of the Armenian genocide.

In 1927, he came to America, living in the Bronx, New York and Englewood, New Jersey. There he worked as a jeweler and watch maker and raised a family with his wife, Gula; loving children, Rita and Berj; and later in life two grandsons. Mr. Bahtirian never forgot the life he'd been forced to live as a child in Turkey and was an active member of Armenian cultural groups dedicated to ensuring that the genocide would never be forgotten or repeated.

During World War II, he went to work for his adopted country, serving proudly as an instructor at the Naval Air Warfare Center in Indianapolis, Indiana. There he specialized in the construction and repair of the famous Norden Bomb Sight.

Mr. Bahtirian lived a tremendous life and he bore witness to some of the most significant events of the 20th Century, from the Armenian Genocide to World War II. And he ensured that the lessons learned from those events would bear the fruits of peace for his children and grandchildren. Each year, as more and more survivors of the Armenian Genocide pass, let us be certain that their memory lives on and that we never see such a travesty again.